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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06441 201113Z

13
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
---------- 073837
Z 201051Z JUL 76
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1232
AMEMBASSY CAIRO FLASH
AMEMBASSY JIDDA FLASH

S E C R E T BEIRUT 6441

EXDIS

HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, AEMR, SA , EG
SUBJECT: BEIRUT EVACUATION

REF: STATE 178394

1. I CONVEYED REFTEL MESSAGE TO EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR METWALLI THIS MORNING, JULY 20, AS INSTRUCTED. METWALLI HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF THE POSTPONEMENT AND CALLED ABU JAAFAR (ALSO OUR PLO CONTACT) IN MY PRESENCE. ABU JAAFAR CONFIRMED TO HIM THAT ARAFAT HAD INDEED GIVEN ORRTY
TO POSTPONE CONVOY AND THAT SECURITY IN
NABATIYA AREA IS REASON FOR POSTPONEMENT. ABU JAAFAR TOLD EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR THAT PLO IS CONCERNED ABOUT PRESENCE OF SOME DISSIDENT ELEMENTS ALONG ROUTE AND THEY WISH TO CLEAR THIS UP BEFORE TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ESCORTING OUR CONVOY.

2. WHEN I INDICATED CONFIDENTIALLY TO METWALLI THAT SOME PEOPLE WONDER WHETHER ARAFAT'S ACTION MIGHT BE A POLITICAL PLOY ON PART OF PLO, METWALLI DENIED THIS CATEGORICALLY. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN IN CLOSE AND CONTINUOUS CONTACT WITH PLO AND HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT PLO IS DETERMINED TO HELP WITH OUR EVACUATIONS. HE SAID
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THAT WHEN HE DISCUSSED THIS LATEST EVACUATION WITH ABU LATIF

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(FARUK QADDUMI), ABU LUTIF HAD EXPRESSED PREFERENCE FOR SEA EVACUATION BUT IN ACCEPTING LAND EVACUATION ROUTE, HAD SAID "WE WANT TO DO WHAT WILL MAKE IT EASIEST FOR BOTH AMERICANS AND US."

3. COMMENT: I AM PREPARED TO ACCEPT METWALLI'S JUDGMENT THAT THIS IS NOT RPT NOT A PLO POLITICAL PLOY AND THAT THERE MAY WELL BE SOME SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE NABATIYA AREA. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PLO IS BEING DOUBLY CAUTIOUS IN VIEW OF INFORMATION WE PASSED PLO RE PFLP THREAT WE HAD PICKED UP EARLIER (BEIRUT 6371). THIS MAY EXPLAIN PLO SECURITY OFFICIAL'S COMMENT TO OUR RSO YESTERDAY RE PRESENCE ALONG WAY OF PFLP CONTINGENT. IT COULD BE THAT PLO WANTS TO MAKE DOUBLY SURE THAT NO SUCH CONTINGENT EXISTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMERGENCY EVACUATION, CITIZEN PROTECTION, PALESTINIANS, EVACUATION PLANS, CAT-B, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, FOREIGN INTERES T REPRESENTATION, PROTECTIVE SERVICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT06441
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760278-0920
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760742/aaaabkqy.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS; EXDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 178394
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEIRUT EVACUATION
TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, LE, SA, EG, US, PLO, (QADDOUMI, FAROUK), (ARAFAT, YASSER), (JAAFAR, ABU), (METWALLI)
To: STATE JIDDA CAIRO
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006